

The clouds hung low over London

by 221bLondon

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Summary: When Scotland Yard needs the help of Sherlock Holmes to solve one of their cases, the detective meets Rachel, the victim's sister, who seems to be just as broken as Sherlock. [SherlockxOC] Set in a possible future after The Abominable Bride.

1. About a murder

****A/N:** Hi! This is my first story on this website, I hope you enjoy it. Any reviews would be highly appreciated. :) I'm from Germany so English is not my native language - if you notice any grammatical errors, please let me know and I'll try to fix them as soon as possible.**

* * *

><p>The clouds hung low over London, and the sun was not yet strong enough to heat up the air - exactly the weather he preferred. Or would have preferred, if it wasn't for the pouring rain, that is. With a sigh, Sherlock Holmes turned up his collar, got out of the cab and hurried towards the building. Azure Jay Hospital, said a sign next to the door. It was one of those private mental health wards that had seemingly popped out of nowhere in the whole city recently. When he walked towards the counter, a man with grey-blond hair called for him out of the hallway to his left: "Sherlock, we're over here! He's with us," he added to the receptionist, who nodded and continued to type on his keyboard.

Sherlock Holmes walked towards the other man, saving himself the unnecessary greeting by directly asking: "Well, Lestrade, what have you got for me today?"

"A woman, she's dead," the DI answered.

"Oh really, I never would have guessed," said Sherlock while he followed Lestrade through the open door into one of the patients' rooms. The DI snorted, while Sherlock took a look around the room.

Bed, armchair, small shelf and a telly, nothing too fancy. The dead woman was sitting in the armchair as if she was just taking a nap, still in her pyjamas. The whole room was filled with policemen.

Sherlock turned around to Lestrade. "I need everybody gone while I take a look at her."

"Alright," the DI muttered, then raising his voice continued: "Okay guys, everyone out for a minute."

When the idiots were finally gone, Sherlock rushed towards the woman to examine her. He didn't have long though before he heard loud voices in the corridor and the door was teared open. "Now le-let me through, I n-need to see her!," a woman exclaimed, while the DI tried to block her view on the dead body. "Miss, this is a murder scene, you can't just walk in hereâ€|"

"Just let her have a look at her sister, Graham," Sherlock interfered while he got up from the floor on which he had kneeled. "I have seen everything I need."

"Sister? And my name is Greg!," the DI said to Sherlock, but then he took a step back to let the woman through the door. When she saw her dead sister she froze and tears filled up her eyes immediately. "Oh Melodyâ€|"

Ignoring her, Sherlock started to explain his deductions to Lestrade: "She's been having an affair. Her lover came to see her this morning, he killed her. Some kind of poison, gave her an injection in her back. You can clearly-"

"An affair?," the woman asked, getting out of her trance. "She- she hasn't had a boy- a boyfriend in years."

"Yes, an affair, to a married man - that's while she kept it a secret, obviously."

"But there weren't any visitors allowed this early in the morning," Lestrade remarked.

"Even if there were, do you think the killer would be stupid enough to walk right past the front desk after murdering someone? Just do me a favour and think before you speak. Look at her pyjama bottoms, all wet and dirty at the seam. It's not very hard to climb out of the window when you live at the first floor to meet a secret lover. He gave her the injection, then carried her back in, hoping no one would notice for a while that this woman in her armchair isn't just sleeping, but dead. Find out what the poison is, this will lead us straight to her murderer. He is a tall man, wealthy, and lives in London. You'll probably find shoe prints outside, if you just hurry up a little so the rain won't wash them away, and his DNA all over her body. He clearly didn't plan this murder very precisely, or else he is just stupid. You'll find the victim's phone on him."

After he finished, Sherlock walked out of the room, leaving the speechless DI, the woman, and her dead sister behind.

* * *

><p>It was a relief to finally leave the building and step out into the cold morning air. Being there had brought back memories that he'd rather have forgotten all about. He could still see it as if it were only yesterday that Mycroft had found him after another overdose, and decided it was time to get some "proper help." Not that Sherlock would have cared, anyway. Nothing had really mattered at that time.<p>

Sherlock was so lost in his thoughts that it took him a while to register someone behind him was calling his name. He turned around and saw the victim's sister coming up to him. "Mr Holmes," she said, "how did, um, I, I mean, could you explain to me wh-what happened to my sister, please? The p-police isn't very helpful."

"No, they hardly ever areâ€|" Sherlock smiled. "Do you mind if we just pop into this kiosk over there? Not really a fan of standing around in the rain, and you should probably eat something."

"S-sure."

They crossed the street and took a seat in the small restaurant, where Sherlock ordered a cooked breakfast for the woman.

"W-why don't you eat something, t-too?," she asked

"Not now. But you look as if you haven't eaten anything in days."

"Well, s-so do you."

Sherlock saw that they weren't getting anywhere, so he decided to drop being nice now. He had better things to do than to care about this woman, anyway. It hadn't really done him any good the last time he decided to go into that kind of thing, had it?

"You wanted to know how I knew about your sister's affair. There wasn't any boyfriend in the pictures on her wall, only you and her mother, but then she had a box of chocolates in one of her drawers - not the kind a family member would give you. Also, there was her jewelry, obviously. In her room there wasn't much else of any value, and since she is in a hospital, where would she get the money from to buy herself brand new earrings and a necklace? So a lover it is. Since the security at that place is basically a joke, it couldn't have been very hard to sneak out every now and again to meet someone. Now on to the slightly more interesting part: Why did she have to die? To answer this, one should first wonder why they would have kept their relationship a secret in the first place. Because she knew her family wouldn't approve of it? Not very likely, considering that she already was in a mental health clinic and most people probably thought the worst of her already. So he wanted to keep it a secret then, maybe because he didn't want to be seen spending time with someone who could damage his reputation, maybe because he is married man. And what started out as a thrilling affair that would save him from his normal boring life, now suddenly began to threaten his very identity. They had an argument yesterday night. Maybe she said she'd tell his wife about the affair, but we can't know that for sure. Afterwards, she removed the jewelry because she was angry at him. She cried all night, which was clear from her red eyes. He came back this morning to finish the matter once and for all. Any questions?"

She just stared at him for a couple of seconds. "Well, t-t-that w-wasâ€¦"

"Brilliant?," he suggested. "Well, it has been a great pleasure to meet you and enlighten you on such obvious events, but I'm afraid I have to go now, as there are far more important things to do."

And for the second time that morning, Sherlock Holmes just walked out of the room, telling himself that _he didn't care about any of it._

2. About two cups of tea

****A/N: Thanks for following this story, Olympichopefull98 :) Here comes chapter two: About two cups of tea****

* * *

><p>"You did what?" John screamed at him, pacing through the living room of 221B Baker Street, while Sherlock lay on the couch, annoyed by John's outburst. "Sherlock Holmes, you really are an utterlyâ€¦" Mary had John made stop swearing for the sake of the baby, which now saved Sherlock from John's wide range of offending vocabulary - git, piss bottle, asshole, to name but a few.<p>

With a sigh, Sherlock got up and walked towards the kitchen. Not that he had wanted anything there, but the lying-on-the-sofa-while-John-yelled-at-you kind of got on his nerves after a while. After having not seen his friend for almost a month, when John had come around to visit this afternoon _this_ wasn't exactly what Sherlock had imagined.

"Jesus, Sherlock, that woman had just lost her sister. Imagine I would treat you this way if Mycroft were found dead."

"That is probably going to happen pretty soon if he keeps eating all of those plum puddings."

John chuckled and leaned into the door frame. "Yeah, true. But you see my point, though. Maybe you could just try to be a bit nicer in the future."

"How's Mary? And Hannah?" Sherlock asked in an attempt to change the subject while he took two mugs out of a cupboard and started making tea.

"Still not sleeping at night, constantly crying. That bloody colics simply won't stop. Listen, I can't stay long, I should probably get back to Mary. I just wanted to check whether you've gotten any news on the Moriarty front."

"Nope. Still nothing," Sherlock answered, crunching his teeth. Since Moriarty's _Did you miss me?_ message took over every screen in the whole of Britain two months ago, there hadn't been any sign of Moriarty whatsoever. Even though Sherlock could have swornâ€¦

John's buzzing phone distracted Sherlock from his thoughts. John took his mobile out of his pocket and read the text he'd gotten, then took

his jacket from the armrest of his chair where he had placed it. "Alright Sherlock, I better go now. See you around?" And gone he was, leaving Sherlock alone with two steaming cups of black tea.

* * *

><p>It was only two days later that Sherlock ran into her again. He was on his way to Mycroft when the two of them literally bumped into each other on Canterbury Terrace.<p>

"Sorry," he said, and was about to walk past her, when he realized that she was the sister of the affair-victim. She had recognized him, too.

"Mi-Mister Holmes," she said, a slight smile appearing on her face. " 'Never ignore a coincidence. Unless you're busy, in which case, always ignore a coincidence.' Care for t-tea?" she asked and crossed the street to get to a little cafe, not checking whether he followed her or not.

Sherlock stood still for a moment, indecisive, but then curiosity got the better of him and he hurried after the woman. She seemed interesting enough, and, after all, he really didn't have much else to do. True, Mycroft expected him in the Diogenes Club, but Sherlock liked to keep his brother waiting. Ever since his overdose the day Moriarty seemingly came back, Mycroft had made a point in checking in with Sherlock at least once a week to give him yet another lecture about his drug habit. Sherlock really wasn't in the mood right now to be threatened by Mycroft with a drug rehab program yet again.

He stepped after her into the little cafe. The woman must come here regularly, for while she walked through the room she moved as if she knew the disposal of all the tables in her way by heart. Purposefully she made her way to a table in the back of the cafe, in front of a huge window. While Sherlock took place in the seat opposite to her, he noticed the three other people that were in the cafe with them: a business woman working on her laptop and a young couple sharing a piece of cake. Then his eyes focused on the woman in front of him, taking in all the details that he had already briefly noticed out on the street. The chapped lips, the blue shades under the reddened eyes. She looked as if she was about to say something, but at this moment the waiter arrived at their table and asked them for their orders.

After he had left, the woman made an effort to tuck two flicks of hair, which had fallen out of her messy bun, behind her ears. "I- I'm Rachel, by th-the way," she said.

>"Sherlock."
"I know. I f-f-found your website. I would have thought you were a bri-brilliant man if I hadn't met you the other day."

Remembering John's words, Sherlock answered: "Yes. I'm afraid that wasn't my best behaviour." After inhaling sharply, he added: "Sorry about that."

"Um, it's okay, I g-guess." She looked at him with interest, but then seemed to remember why she had happened to meet him in the first place. "I wanted to ask whether there were - whether you've heard anything new about the mu-murderer of Melody."

To be honest, Sherlock hadn't really thought about the matter (which was rather boring, actually) at all during the last two days. He had spent most of his waking hours in his mind palace, looking for any details that he might have possibly missed in the Moriarty case. But he couldn't tell her that, of course, so instead he made up excuses: "Mhm, that one, yes. Well, the police are still investigating, and I don't think I should tell you anything untilâ€¦"

"I- I am not stupid, Mr Holmes," she interrupted him.

"I never said you were."

"B-but you thought so. You think that ju-just because I am u-u-unable to- to â€¦ Oh, screw this."

They sat in silence for a couple of seconds.

"How many times?" Sherlock asked.

>"I'm sorry?"<p>

"How many times did you try to kill yourself?"

"W-Why would you think that â€¦ how do- do youâ€¦" Her voice trailed off.

"The scars on your arms," Sherlock said in a low voice, pointing his head to her forearms which rested on the table. Hastily she tried to pull down her sleeves, but it was too late now anyway. He had already seen her scars.

"Some are rather new, while others must be at least five years old, suggesting you've been struggling with depression and self-harm for multiple years. Your mother has been constantly texting you since we've come here, which means she is worried if she doesn't know where you are and what you're up to. And lastly, you didn't seem too shocked by the sight of your sister's corpse. Death is nothing new to you."

Sherlock had expected Rachel to look away, maybe even cry, or become angry at him (the reaction he usually provoked in other people). Instead, she kept looking him straight in the eyes. After he finished his observations, a slight, sad little smile appeared on her face.

"What about you then?" she asked. "How ... how m-m-many drugs did you take today just for the sake of being able to bear all this? T-to bear life?"

Sherlock said nothing for a little while, too surprised for one of his usual sharp comments with which he kept anyone at a distance who had taken a personal interest in him. This was new to him. He wasn't used to being read by other people the way he usually read them, especially not by this woman, who wasn't even a medical doctor. And still, she managed to see what John (or Lestrade, or anyone else but Mycroft really) failed to notice.

"I have a list, if you are that keen to know," he said, rising from the table, just as the waiter approached with the tea that they had ordered.

"May-maybe you'll tell me all about it another time," Rachel said.
"Maybe then I'll tell you m-m-my story, too."

Sherlock put his coat on and gave her a blank look, but then nodded before he turned around and left the cafe.

3. About a new case

A/N: Thank you Thetroublewithexes and xxDignity for following this story/ adding it to your favourites! I'm glad you guys enjoy this little story. :)

* * *

><p>Sherlock was precisely 17 minutes late when he finally walked into the Diogenes Club. Of course his elder brother couldn't resist making an unapproving comment about that fact while Sherlock took a seat opposite his desk. "Just shut up, Mycroft," he said, rolling his eyes. Mycroft merely grinned.<p>

"How are you, brother dear? I see you've made some new acquaintancesâ€|"

"_Please_ tell me you don't spy on my every move with your bloody CCTV cameras."

>"Only because I was concerned about you being late. Who is she?"<p>

"Didn't you look her up already?" Sherlock asked, clearly annoyed.

"Of course I did. I was just trying to have a little _chat_ with my brother."

Sherlock snorted and made an unapproving gesture with his hand.
"Let's not get into this kind of thing. Are there any interesting cases?"

Mycroft thoughtfully looked at his brother for a brief moment, then took a folder off his desk and gave it to Sherlock. While Sherlock opened it and began to browse through the pages, Mycroft explained, "There's still nothing noteworthy going on in London. Nothing that would interest you, anyway. But only just this morning an old friend of mine contacted me to ask for your help in a most urgent matter."

>"An old friend?" Sherlock raised an eyebrow.

"Well, when I say friendâ€| He lives out in Cardiff. I want you to take that case," Mycroft replied.

"Anything else?" Sherlock asked, about to get up and leave the room.

"Yes - Sherlock, why don't you ask Rachel to go out with you again?"

"We're not _going out _with each other. I only just met her by chance."

>"Yes, and I think it would be good for you to spend more time with

her, especially now that -"<p>

"Now that what?" Sherlock demanded to know, but Mycroft wouldn't continue his sentence.

"Nothing, Sherlock. I am worried about you. And I don't think being alone suits you."

"Hmpf," was all Sherlock said before turning his back on Mycroft and leaving the room. Although he didn't want Mycroft to be right, upon leaving the Diogenes Club Sherlock found himself thinking about Rachel. He decided it wouldn't hurt to go to the Yard to check whether Lestrade and his team had made any progress in the case of her sister.

* * *

><p>About two hours later, Sherlock stepped out of a cab and onto Privet Road, a quiet little street in the north of London. Almost identically looking single-family homes lined the street, and two little kids perched on the sidewalk, painting with chalk. Sherlock walked past them towards the house with the number four on it, and rang the bell.<p>

An elderly woman opened the door.

"Mrs Adams? I'm Sherlock Holmes. I have been-"

"Oh, yes, Mr Holmes," the woman interrupted. "Rachel told me all about you." She opened the door and made an inviting gesture with her hand. "Please do come in. I'm Saoirse, by the way, Rachel's mum," she continued while she led Sherlock towards the living room. "I'm afraid it's a bit untidy, the children left their toys all over the place. But please take a seat," she pointed towards the sofa, "and make yourself comfortable. Can I get you anything?"

"No, thank you."

At this moment Rachel came into the room, a pair of gardening gloves in her hand and dirt on her trousers. "Mom, I- I th-th-thought I heard the doorbell rin-ringing," she said when Sherlock caught her eye. She immediately straightened her back and folded her arms. "Oh. It's y-y-you again."

"Yes," Sherlock said, still standing in front of the sofa. "Actually, I just wanted to let you know about some new information in your sister's case, but if you'd rather not have me here I won't bother you any longerâ€|"

Rachel's face suddenly became much friendlier as she tried to stop him from leaving. "No, no of c-course not. S-s-sorry for being so rude. What - what is it?"

Rachel's mother, who had been standing in the doorway, indecisive about whether to go and make some tea or stay and listen to her daughter's conversation with that detective man, now took a seat on the sofa. "Did you find out who did this to my daughter?"

"Yes," Sherlock answered. "The police hasn't confirmed it yet, but I thought you ought to know."

"Well, who w-was i-i-it - who was it then?" Rachel asked, while she sat down on the armrest of the sofa next to her mother, putting one arm around her shoulders.

"Tom Baker."

"_The _Tom Baker? The mayor of London?" Saoirse asked disbelievingly.

"Yes."

"Ho-how di-did you work that out?" Rachel wanted to know, but her mother's crying stopped Sherlock from answering.

"I better go now."

"Oh no, noâ€¦" Saoirse said, fetching a handkerchief out of her pocket. "I'll calm down in a minute. I'm just going to make some tea." And she hurried out of the room towards the kitchen.

"She ha-hates to cry in front of o-other people, even me," Rachel explained, kicking her boots off her feet and pulling her knees up towards her chest. "Thank- thank you for coming here to tell us."

Sherlock just stood there, in the middle of the living room, not really sure about what to do now - a feeling he rarely ever got, but with Rachel, this seemed to become a more common situation.

"I didn't know you were Irish," he said at last, for the lack of knowing how to provide her comfort.

"Well I'm not, I w-was born in London. My mom mo-moved h-here when she was pr-pregn-pregnant with Melody and me to be - to be with our dad."

"And when did he leave your mother?"

Rachel gave him a questioning look, but then decided to just go along with him seeming to know everything about her life. "A-about one year after we were born. Never heard of him since. But - but let's not get into that story."

They sat in silence for a few moments until Rachel's mother came back in to bring them their tea. "I'll just see how Anna and Benjamin are doing," she said, already on her way back out of the room.

"The neighbour's kids," Rachel explained. "She likes to take care of other people, t-to stay busy. Es-especially now thatâ€¦" Her voice trailed off.

>"By the way, I don't take drugs to bear life, as you put it," Sherlock said after another moment of silence. "I just take them to avoid being bored when there aren't any interesting cases."

Rachel shook her head. "I-Isn't that just the s-same thing?" she asked and took a sip of her tea.

Sherlock kept quiet for a moment, thoughts running through his head,

but then he decided to take the risk and asked, "Would you like to go on a case with me?"

"Are you - are you actually a-asking me to go investigate a _mu-murder_ with you?"

"Yes," Sherlock answered, realising how stupid of an idea this was. _Of course_ she wouldn't come with him. Her sister had just gotten murdered, why would she want to go to yet another crime scene?

"Y-you know what? Yes, I'll come," Rachel then said, much to Sherlock's (and seemingly also to her own) surprise.

"You do?"

"Yes. Wh-where is it?"

"Cardiff."

"When are you planning on going?"

"Tomorrow morning. Only if that suits you, of course," he added, remembering how John had always hated to be ordered about by Sherlock. "I will text you the details later."

"Where - where did you get my num- oh, forget it."

Sherlock got up. "I will see you tomorrow then."

"Yes," Rachel smiled. "S-see you tomorrow."

4. About a missing person

****A/N: As requested by sherlockedaf, here's chapter four: About a missing person.****

****As always, thanks for reading and please review, I would love to here your thoughts!****

* * *

><p>Sherlock already spotted Rachel from the distance while he made his way through Victoria Station, where they had arranged to meet at one of the platforms.<p>

"Morning," he said. "Good to go?"

She smiled when she saw him, nodded, and together they boarded the train to Cardiff.

The train was mostly empty - usually people only wanted to get to London this early in the morning, not leave the city - so they took place opposite each other and put their bags on the empty seats next to them.

"S-so wh-what exactly happened?" Rachel asked.

"Douglas Crieff, the former British ambassador to Somalia, thinks

that somebody kidnapped his girlfriend. According to him, she completely vanished two days ago, and took all her belongings with her."

"What i-if she just l-le-left him, moved out? Wh-what makes him think that so-some-something ha-happened to her?"

"I don't know," Sherlock answered. "That's what we're about to find out."

* * *

><p>"My brother has booked us two rooms in the Taff Hotel," Sherlock explained while the two of them walked towards one of the cabs waiting in front of the train station.<p>

"S-so we'll go there first?" Rachel asked.

"I thought so, yes."

"And th-then on to the ambassador. I- I must say, I'm rather c-c-curious indeed to find out what happened," Rachel said, sounding a little bit surprised about herself. Sherlock smiled.

Once they had checked into their rooms at the hotel, they decided to walk to Mr Crieff's house which was only ten minutes away by foot. He was living in a white mansion in one of the richest parts of the city. When Sherlock rang the bell at the gate, a maid introduced herself as Hennessey and welcomed them into the entrance hall.

"Mr Crieff will be here for you in a second," she said before she hurried off to continue her work. Sherlock looked over to Rachel who took in the atmosphere of the room, seeming rather impressed. At this moment, a door behind them opened and in came a man in his mid-sixties, with short blonde hair and round glasses on his nose.

"Ah, you must be Mr Holmes, good morning." He walked towards Sherlock and shook his hand. "And who's this?" He turned to Rachel.

"My colleague," Sherlock said.

"Colleague?" Rachel gave him a questioning but amused look, which Sherlock chose to ignore. "Now, Mr Crieff, please tell me exactly what happened on the 25th."

The man sat down on one of the large white sofas before he began to tell his story: "When I woke up that morning, Clara was still asleep. I had an appointment with my doctor at 8 - my knee, you must know, it's getting worse and worse every day. I left the house at 7.35 am precisely, and my chauffeur then drove me to Dr Iokova's surgery. He picked me back up there at half past nine to drive me back to my house, and when I came in here, Clara was nowhere to be found. Her suitcase is gone, all her clothes are gone, she -"

"I understand she wasn't permanently living here with you?" Sherlock interrupted.

"No, " Mr Crieff continued, "originally she is from Glasgow and still has her flat there. But I know that she didn't just leave me. She

wouldn't do that. I tried calling her but she isn't picking up her phone. You must find her, Mr Holmes. Something has happened to her."

"What if she wanted to break up with you?"

"The day before she disappeared, I asked her to marry me. And she said yes. Why would she leave me without any notice the next day?"

"Did you call the police?"

"Of course I did! But they wouldn't listen to me. There are no signs of violence, no blood anywhere. They said she just ran off."

"Would you mind if we had a look around your house?"

"Go on, go on," Mr Crieff said, got up from the sofa and opened one of the many doors. "This is the kitchen, and through here you can get to the living room. I'll need to go to my office - urgent business - but if you have any questions, please ask either me or Hennessey."

"Very well, Mr Crieff. Only allow me one more question: Was there anybody else here that morning Clara disappeared?"

"No, no one. Wilfred, the gardener, only works in the afternoon and Hennessey had taken two days off to visit her parents."

"Thank you," Sherlock said, before he turned around to Rachel. "Shall we?" He asked her, and Rachel followed him into the kitchen.

"So w-what d-do you think?" Rachel asked him, but Sherlock only shrugged his shoulders.

"I don't know yet. We'll see what information we can gather around the house."

"B-but he s-said the po-pol-police already came and had a look at e-everything."

"Yes, but the police always miss something." 'Just remember the case of your sister,' Sherlock wanted to add, but stopped himself from saying this aloud.

Once they had made their way into the living room, Rachel had gotten tired of looking around for clues, especially since there didn't seem to be any at all. She was therefore delighted to see a cat in the middle of the room, sleeping in the sunlight that shone through the window, and sat down next to it on the white, fluffy carpet. As she petted the cat, she noticed something blue lying underneath a cupboard. "Sh-Sherlock," she said, "what's this?"

Sherlock knelt down next to the cupboard and fetched the blue thing from underneath it.

"It's a dental brace," he said, before he called out for the ambassador: "Mr Crieff, would you come here for a second?"

The man hurried into the room. "Yes, what is it? Have you found

something?"

"Did this belong to Clara?" Sherlock showed him the brace.

"Yes, she always has to wear them at night. She was wearing them the morning I last saw her."

"C-couldn't they have just fallen off?" Clara asked, but Sherlock shook his head.

"Not very likely. Looks more like she was hit from the back, thereby losing her brace before she fell to the floor." He looked over to Rachel. "Good thing you found this. Right now this is the only thing we have to go on."

And even though Sherlock made a point of going through every other room of the house, the brace was the only clue they found in the case of Clara's disappearance. They also spoke to all of the neighbours, but none of them seemed to have noticed anything unusual. The longer they failed to find any new information that would lead them somewhere, the more frustrated Sherlock seemed to get.

"Sh-sh-should we j-just g-go back to the hotel, then?" Rachel asked, and the detective nodded once in agreement.

* * *

><p>Later that night, Sherlock was sitting at the little table in his hotel room, trying to find useful information online that would help him solve the case, when he heard someone knocking his door. Reluctantly he got up to open it, and saw Rachel in her pyjamas standing in front of him.<p>

"H-hi," she said, "do you mind if I come in?"

"Why are you still awake?" Sherlock asked, as he stepped aside and then closed the door behind her. They had had dinner at a little restaurant near the hotel, and afterwards each of them had gone into their own hotel room. Sherlock had assumed Rachel had gone straight to bed.

"Couldn't fall asleep," she said, while she sat down on Sherlock's bed. "D-did y-you find anything useful?"

"Not yet." Frustrated, Sherlock closed his laptop and walked up and down the small room. "She was hit on the back of her head, and then taken away - either still unconscious or dead. But why? I'm missing the obvious!"

"Sh-Sherlock? C-could I stay here tonight?" Sherlock turned around to Rachel and only then noticed that she was crying, noiselessly. He sat down on his bed next to Rachel who had curled into a ball.

"I'm sorry," Sherlock said softly, "I shouldn't have asked you to work on this case with me. I should have known thatâ€¦"

"No, Sh-Sherlockâ€¦," Rachel interrupted. "It's g-got n-nothing to do with you, or the c-case." She looked up to him, wiping her tears away with one hand. "Sherlock, you should know that I am a d-d-deep - a deeply unhappy person. Y-you pr-probably shouldn't spend t-ti-time

w-with me."

After a moment of silence, Sherlock said, " And I'm a drug-addicted sociopath." He absent-mindedly started stroking her hair. "I guess we're quite the good match, then."

"I r-really don't th-thi-think you are."

"What, a drug addict?"

"No," Rachel said, her voice going quiet as she finally drifted off to sleep. "Y-you r-really aren't a sociopath. You care about peopleâ€|"

Sherlock kept sitting next to Rachel, stroking her hair even long after she had fallen asleep.

End
file.